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FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0178
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1423
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1237
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC

UNCLAS COTONOU 000105

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR AF/W (DBANKS) AND AF/EPS (THASTINGS)
DEPT PLEASE PASS USTR (LAGAMA)
DAKAR FOR FAS (HANSON)
ACCRA FOR REO (JHUNT)
PARIS FOR D'ELIA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [BN](#)

SUBJECT: COTTON HARVEST NUMBERS RELEASED AND ENDOSULFAN BANNED

REF: 07 COTONOU 810

¶1. SUMMARY: Benin's Cotton Stakeholders Association (AIC) estimates the mid-season 2007-2008 cotton harvest at 182,567 metric tons, accounting for about 65 percent of the estimated total production (Reftel). In other cotton news the GOB, citing environmental and health concerns, banned the import and the use of the cotton pesticide known as endosulfan and ordered it replaced by tihan. End Summary.

Mid-Season Cotton Production Estimate

¶2. According to the AIC, as of January 20, 2008, Benin's cotton harvest amounted to 182,567 metric tons. The AIC's 2007-2008 expected total production is 280,911 metric tons (Reftel) The AIC expects the remaining 98,344 metric tons which remain to arrive in the ginning factories by early March 2008. Instead of the 257,627 hectares of cotton originally projected for cultivation 233,633 hectares were actually planted, according to the AIC. This decrease in cultivated land is in part due to heavy rainfall in late 2007 which washed away approximately 6,400 hectares of land normally used to produce cotton.

Endosulfan Banned

¶3. On February 6, 2008, the GOB decided to ban the import and the use of endosulfan, a pesticide for cotton plantation treatment, for future agricultural campaigns with an exception for the 2008-2009 campaign. Tihan is the new pesticide the GOB chose to replace endosulfan. The GOB stated it banned the import of endosulfan because it is dangerous and harmful to health and the environment. An AIC source explained that Endosulfan has a high level of toxicity and, according to him, caused the death of a number of cotton farmers. Further health problems arose when farmers used endosulfan on their food crops. The AIC source added that endosulfan keeps away reptiles, rats, and other animals, which upsets the environmental balance.

¶5. The GOB has authorized the one-time, simultaneous, use of endosulfan and tihan for the 2008-2009 campaign for largely economic reasons. 576,000 liters of endosulfan are still in stock and the GOB does not want importers who already bought endosulfan to lose money they have already spent as a result of the ban.

¶6. Comment: Cotton production in Benin is back on track. Though the GOB target of 400,000 metric tons will not be met, it is important

to underline that this year's estimated production will increase by almost 15 percent compared to the last campaign. The replacement of endosulfan by tihan may impact this optimism. Cotton farmers' lack of familiarity with the proper utilization of a new pesticide and the reluctance of farmers to use a product they are not familiar with may constitute an obstacle for the 2008-2009 cotton campaign.
End Comment.

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